



1:30 pm
Currently: 88
RealFeel® High: 99
Humidity: 54
Winds: SE at 7 mph

[Click here for a 15-day forecast!](#)

[New Search](#) [Return to results](#) [Printer Friendly](#)

About your archives purchase:

Your purchase of articles expires on .
You have viewed articles and have articles remaining.

Daily News (Bowling Green, KY)

Ensuring highway safety SAFE trucks provide free help to stranded motorists

BURTON SPEAKMAN, The Daily News, bspeakman@bgdailynews.com

Published: June 4, 2008

More than two years after the **SAFE patrol** trucks started patrolling Interstate 65, the trucks have become a familiar sight all over Kentucky.

Safety Assistance for Freeway Emergencies safety patrol officers do anything from changing a tire to helping someone who has run out of gas to providing basic emergency medical assistance or calling an ambulance. The trucks are a free service offered by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet.

During just a few hours Tuesday, drivers Jim Elliott and Mike Rich cleared debris from the road, tagged an abandoned vehicle, checked on the status of a distressed tractor-trailer driver and called an ambulance for a woman who passed out while driving.

"Our goal is to do everything we can to ensure the motoring public's safety," Elliott said.

Four drivers patrol I-65 from the Kentucky-Tennessee line to mile marker 58. The drivers also help with calls on the Natcher Parkway for assistance, Elliott said. The drivers work in two shifts, from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. and from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m.

"With two trucks, our response time has been incredible," he said.

The drivers work closely with Kentucky State Police and Kentucky Vehicle Enforcement, helping with stranded vehicles and making law enforcement aware of things such as hitchhikers – hitchhiking is illegal on the interstate.

During the summer, most of the issues on the interstate revolve around removing chunks of damaged tire from commercial trucks, said driver Mike Rich.

Dealing with abandoned vehicles and motorists who have run out of fuel are also common issues, he said

Daily News Extras

- [Soky411.biz](#)
- [Multimedia](#)
- [Place classified ad online](#)
- [Make us your homepage!](#)
- [Get headline emails](#)
- [Online Forms](#)
- [RSS](#)

Higher gas prices have not led to more people running out of gas on the interstate, Elliott said.

"We don't give them a lot of gas, we just give them enough to get to the next exit," he said.

The drivers have been trained in first aid and trained to use an automated external defibrillator machine, which they carry on the truck, Elliott said.

"We may not be able to handle every situation, but we do the best we can with what we have," he said.

The number of people helped varies each day, Rich said.

One Sunday there were nine stops, and on Monday there were eight while Rich was the only SAFE driver working, he said. Yet, there are some days when there isn't anyone to help.

The trucks travel an average of 300 miles per day, Elliott said.

"Most of the people from here know about the trucks now, but we still surprise some people from out of state," he said.

The drivers also help with traffic control during an accident, using their mobile signs to alert drivers of lane closures, Elliott said.

Motorists' problems are not the only roadway issues with which the drivers help. Goats have been found in the road, Rich said. There has also been a bull and tortoise found on the interstate, Elliott said.

The other two drivers who work locally for SAFE are Mike Thomas and Clayton Shuffett.

"This is a great job. You get to come to work every day and help people," Elliott said.

The program is continuing to grow throughout the state and gets great support from the transportation cabinet, he said.

The SAFE program is the only cabinet program that receives nothing but positive feedback, said Keirsten Jagers, spokeswoman for the transportation cabinet in Bowling Green.

Copyright 2008 News Publishing LLC (Bowling Green, KY)

[Article Bookmark - free for 14 days from date of publication](#)

Local Stock Sponsor



Click to visit
us online

gathering data from remote server...

News Sections

- » Home
- » Local
- » Opinion
- » Obituaries

Services & Online Features

- » Classifieds
- » Subscribers
- » Calendar
- » Editor/Story Tip



» Contact Us

Daily I

- » Features
- » Sports
- » Regional News
- » Archives

- » Staff Directory
- » RSS Feeds

- » Privacy Policy
- » Advertising
- » Online Store
- » Soky411.biz
- » Online Forms

813 Cc
PO Bo
Bowlin
(270)

Daily News